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NOTES AND NEWS

AN educational departure that should be of much interest and significance to philosophers is being instituted in the form of a new required course for Freshmen in Columbia College, beginning next fall. The course, to be given five hours a week throughout the Freshmen year, is entitled Introduction to Contemporary Civilization, and is designed to be a survey and interpretation of the chief features, intellectual, social and economic, of our own civilization, and a comparison and contrast with the leading elements of the civilization of earlier periods. It is to conclude with a somewhat extensive consideration of the general and insistent problems confronting contemporary society in the light of the background developed in the earlier part of the course.

This course is to be given in a number of sections, which are to be taught consecutively through a whole semester by members of the departments of philosophy, history, economics and politics, replacing required courses in the first two departments named. The material has been fused on the basis of the problems treated rather than on any traditional departmental lines. It is hoped by thus presenting an objective and scientifically motived inquiry into the character, origins and possibilities of contemporary civilization, the student will be undergoing a genuinely educative process, that he will begin to have a sense of the context of the particular subject matters of inquiry in the world in which he is living, and that in consequence of this orientation he will be enabled to choose his electives and form his intellectual interests and judgments in a broad and genuinely philosophical fashion.

The material in the course more specifically taken from the field of philosophical inquiry, is the section of the course dealing with the World of Human Nature, a discussion of human traits and their social significance; and a discussion of the outstanding and controlling ideas of the modern period, and their development from Francis Bacon through the rise of the doctrine of evolution, and the diffusion of the spirit and methods of science.